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Title:

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR COOLING ELECTRONIC ASSEMBLIES

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SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR COOLING ELECTRONIC ASSEMBLIES

BACKGROUND

[0001] As technology has progressed allowing smaller and faster electronic components, the designs of electronic equipment have included more densely populated systems of such faster and smaller components. Increased speed has lead to increased heat generated by the electronics. Moreover, because the equipment is typically packed densely into smaller containers, the close proximity of each component exacerbates the heat being generated by the electronics. Because electronics are subject to heat damage, it becomes desirable to dissipate that heat to protect the underlying electronics.

SUMMARY

[0002] Representative embodiments of the present invention are directed to a heat sink comprising one or more heat pipes connected to a base member, a plurality of thermal plates connected to the one or more heat pipes at predefined intervals, wherein the one or more heat pipes intersects the plurality of thermal plates, and an opening fashioned in each one of the plurality of thermal plates.

[0003] Additional representative embodiments of the present invention are directed to a method of cooling an electronic assembly comprising conducting heat from the electronic assembly into a plurality of heat pipes extending from a conductive plate connected to the electronic assembly, conducting heat from the plurality of heat pipes to a set of thermal fins connected at predetermined intervals along the plurality of heat pipes, and exchanging heat from the plurality of heat pipes and the set of thermal fins to air flowing in a direction across the set of thermal fins, and a direction through an aperture in each one of the set of thermal fins.

[0004] Further representative embodiments of the present invention are directed to a system for dissipating heat generated in an electronic assembly comprising means for moving heat from the electronic assembly to a plurality of conductive columns extending perpendicularly from a base plate in contact with the electronic assembly, means for moving heat from the plurality of conductive columns to one or more thermal plates connected at

predetermined distances along the plurality of conductive columns, wherein each one of the one or more thermal plates has an orifice there through, and means for transferring heat from the plurality of conductive columns and the one or more thermal plates to air flowing in a direction perpendicular to the base plate, and a direction parallel to the one or more thermal plates.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] For a more complete understanding of the present invention, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which:

[0006] FIGURE 1 is a perspective drawing illustrating one embodiment of a multi-direction cooling assembly;

[0007] FIGURE 2 is a perspective drawing illustrating another embodiment of a multi-direction cooling assembly;

[0008] FIGURE 3 is a perspective drawing illustrating a further embodiment of a multi-direction cooling assembly; and

[0009] FIGURE 4 is a perspective drawing illustrating a further embodiment of a multi-direction cooling assembly.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] FIGURE 1 is a perspective drawing illustrating one embodiment of multi-direction cooling assembly 10. Multi-direction cooling assembly 10 is shown mounted on to circuit board 11. The function of multi-direction cooling assembly 10 is to cool or dissipate the heat generated from circuit board 11. Multi-direction cooling assembly 10 comprises a conductive plate, such as base plate 100. In some embodiments, base plate 100 may be made from copper, because of copper's high rate of thermal conductivity. Other embodiments may use materials with similar high thermal conductivity. Heat pipe 101 is a 'U'-shaped pipe anchored in base plate 100 extending upwards. Heat pipes are well-known in the art as a very efficient heat conductor. A typical heat pipe consists of a vessel in which

its inner walls are usually lined with a wicking structure. The vessel may be constructed from copper, aluminum, or other such high thermal conductive material. The vessel is typically first vacuumed and then charged with a working fluid. The resulting structure is then generally hermetically sealed. When a heat pipe is heated at one end, the working fluid typically evaporates from liquid to vapor. The vapor generally travels through the hollow core to the other end of the heat pipe at near sonic speed, where heat energy is usually being removed by a heat sink or other means. The vapor typically condenses back to liquid at the other end which usually releases heat at the same time. The liquid then typically travels back to the original end via capillary action in the wicking structure. In operation, the working fluid in a heat pipe can usually transport a very large amount of heat and makes heat pipes much better heat conductors than a solid copper rod.

[0011] Thermal fins, such as thermal fins 103 – 106 may be used in such cooling assemblies. Thermal fins are well known in the art as generally thin, flat pieces of conductive metal, such as aluminum, that are typically used in heat sinks to increase the surface area of the heat dissipating elements. Thermal fins 103 – 106 are arranged around heat pipe 101 and also extend upwards from base plate 100. Each of thermal fins 103 – 106 may include a plate with a hole in it. Holes 107 – 110 are configured such that hole 107 in thermal fin 103 is larger than hole 108 in thermal fin 104, which is larger than hole 109 in thermal fin 105, and so forth. Thus, holes 107 – 110 are implemented in a descending diameter configuration.

[0012] In operation, multi-direction cooling assembly 10 allows heat to be dissipated or exchanged from circuit board 11 by thermal conduction and air flow in any of directions 111 – 114. As air flows along directions 111, 112, and 114 thermal fins 103 – 106, which have generally been heated by the heat generated from circuit board 11 and conducted through base plate 100, heat pipe 101, and air conduction, begin exchanging heat to the air flowing in directions 111, 112, and 114. In exchanging this heat with this cross airflow, thermal fins 103 – 106 are cooled, thus cooling the entire assembly. The embodiment of multi-direction cooling assembly 10 depicted in FIGURE 1 is generally used in passive cooling implementations, in which the air flow typically comes from cross directions 111, 112, and 114.

[0013] FIGURE 2 is a perspective drawing illustrating another embodiment of multi-direction cooling assembly 10. By adding fan 20 to multi-direction cooling assembly 10, multi-direction cooling assembly 10 becomes an active cooling device. Fan 20 directs air through multi-direction cooling assembly 10 in direction 113. By forcing air in direction 113, the cooling or heat dissipating capability of multi-direction cooling assembly 10 is increased. It should be noted that the configuration of multi-direction cooling assembly 10 did not change in moving from a passive cooling device to an active cooling device. The addition of the fan allows multi-direction cooling assembly 10 to become an active cooling device without changes to the structure of multi-direction cooling assembly 10.

[0014] In additional embodiments, any variations on the assembly of multi-direction cooling assembly 10 may be made. For example, holes 107 – 110 may be the same diameter. Moreover, instead of incorporating only two heat pipes, additional heat pipes may be added in relation to the size of the entire assembly. An additional variation that could be made is in the shape of thermal fins 103 – 106. While they are depicted as rectangles in FIGURES 1 and 2, any shape that includes a relatively large surface area may be used, such as circular, flat, wavy, notched, and the like.

[0015] FIGURE 3 is a perspective drawing illustrating a further embodiment of a multi-direction cooling assembly. Heat sink 30 is similar in nature to the cooling assembly depicted in FIGURES 1 and 2; however, heat sink 30 includes several alternative features. Heat sink 30 includes heat pipes 301 – 302, thermal fins 303 – 306, and conducting plate 300. Thermal fins 303 – 306 also include hexagonal apertures or orifices 307 – 310 having the same diameter allowing air to flow down through each level of thermal fins 303 – 306, which may also increase the area that air may flow. Thermal fins 303 – 306 are also implemented as wavy fins, instead of the flat shape illustrated in FIGURES 1 AND 2, which, while maintaining the overall footprint of the fin, increases the surface area to improve heat dissipation.

[0016] FIGURE 4 is a perspective drawing illustrating a further embodiment of a multi-direction cooling assembly. The embodiment shown in FIGURE 4 has been changed with the addition of fan assembly 40. By adding fan assembly 40, the passive cooling system

shown in FIGURE 3, has been converted into an active cooling device with necessity of changing the geometry of heat sink 30.